permitted to import polyester fabrics and zip fasteners of foreign origin free of duty under the DEEC Scheme for manufacture of ready-made garments for export, under bond. Accordingly, they imported 1.13 lakh metres of polyester fabrics valued at Rs. 12.5 lakhs (CIF) and one lakh piece of zip fasteners valued at Rs. 1.03 lakhs (CIF) in March, 1986.

In order to fulfil the export obligations under the Scheme, the Unit filed four Shipping Bills for export of ready-made garments consigned to a party in Afghanistan. These consignments were duly examined and cleared for export out of the bonded warehouse. The goods were declared and certified as 100 per cent polyester garments (ladies night dresses/ nightwears) with 20 Cms. polyester zips.

On information, all the four consignments were intercepted and re-examined by customs authorities and they were found to contain ready-made garments made out of cotton fabrics of Indian origin mixed with ready made garments made out of polyester fabrics. Some of the zip fasteners fitted on the garments were of Indian origin. The goods contained in the four consignments valued at Rs 16.15 lakhs were seized under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.

Investigations conducted revealed that the Unit clandestinely removed and disposed off a part of the polyester fabrics and zip fasteners in the open market. In this connection, four persons including the officer of Customs, incharge of Bond were arrested under the Customs Act. Polyester fabrics, cotton night dresses, polyester ladies night dresses, and zip fasteners valued at Rs. 41.75 lakhs were also seized from the factory premises of the firm.

The officer of Customs concerned has also been placed under suspension.

"African Plan" to augment exports to African countries

796. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government formulated an "African Plan" sometime back to augment exports to the African countries; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof alongwith the follow-up strategy, if any, drawn up in this regard and the results achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) and (b) A Plan for coordinated effort to promote exports to Selected African Countries was prepared sometime ago which took into account the trade linkages with India, the potential and development programmes of these countries. It covered activities such as participation in exhibitions and fairs, interaction between trade bodies etc. While such activities have been selectively carried out, the balance of payment crises in many of these countries, continued adverse weather conditions which have affected some economies and political uncertainties have stood in the way of implementing the Plan as such.

Iron ore exports

797. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that iron-ore exports have gone up recently if so, what are the details of exports of iron ore in terms of tonnage and earnings during the last three years;

(b) what are the reasons for higher exports of iron ore; and

(c) whether the production of pig iron has gone down, if so, the reasons

therefor and to what extent during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Yes, Sir. Details of exports of iron ore in quantity and value terms are given below:—

(Qty : Million tonnes)
(Val: Rs. Crores)

Year	Quantity	Value
1983-84 . .	21·948	383·75
1984-85 . .	25·395	445·84
1985-86 . .	27·955	510·20

(Provisional)

(b) The reasons for higher exports of iron ore are as under:—

(i) Tieing-up export sales on long term basis through signing of long term agreements with major buyers of iron ore.

(ii) Effective marketing strategies in the negotiations to increase exports in terms of quantities in the main markets of Japan, South Korea, etc.

(iii) Diversification of iron ore exports to new markets.

(iv) Provision of incentives by way of marginal discounts in iron ore prices to induce major buyers to increase off-take from Paradip Port to compensate them for relatively higher freight on account of shipments from this port in smaller vessels.

(v) Improvements in ore handing facilities at various ports through constant interaction with port authorities.

(c) The production of saleable pig iron ot the steel plants of Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) is governed by the following considerations:—

(i) The available raw material (hot metal) is distributed judiciously by SAIL for production of steel and pig iron for sale;

(ii) the pig iron production is further regulated by the off-take in the market. The production of pig iron in the steel plants of SAIL during the last three years was as follows:-

Qty.: '000 tonnes

1983-84		1984-85		1985-86	
Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
1587	1407	1200	1126	1188	1160

798. [*Transferred to the 4th August, 1986.*]

Price of rubber

799. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:
SHRI K. GOPALAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the price of rubber during the last three years in the country;

(b) what was the price of rubber during the last three months;

(c) what are the reasons for the fall in the price of rubber; and

(d) what steps are being taken to